

REMARKS

Claims 1 – 20 are pending in the present Application. Claims 1 and 17 have been cancelled, Claims 1, 3, 6 – 9, 12 – 14, 16, 18, and 20, have been amended, and Claims 21 and 22 have been added, leaving Claims 2 – 16 and 18 – 22 for consideration upon entry of the present Amendment.

Claims 3, 8, and 18, have merely been amended to place them in independent form. Support for these amendments can at least be found in Claims 3, 8, and 18, as originally filed.

Claims 2, 6, 7, 9, 12 – 14, 16, and 20, have merely been amended to correct their dependency after the cancellation of Claims 1 and 17.

No new matter has been introduced by these amendments. The amendments do not increase the number of claims. Reconsideration and allowance of the claims are respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 17 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,529,641 to Holtrop et al. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. However, in order to streamline prosecution in this case and facilitate allowance of the claims identified as allowable, Claim 17 has been cancelled and Claim 20 has been amended to depend from allowable Claim 18, thereby rendering this rejection moot. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1, 2, 6, 7, and 9 – 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,529,641 to Holtrop et al in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,854,149 to Nagayama et al. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. However, in order to streamline prosecution in this case and facilitate allowance of the claims identified as allowable, Claim 1 has been cancelled and Claims 2, 6, 7, and 9 – 16 have been amended to ultimately depend from allowable Claim 3 or 8, thereby rendering this rejection moot. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 3 – 5, 8, 18, and 19 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

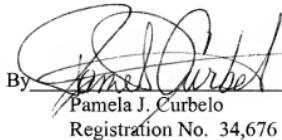
Applicants note that amendments to, cancellation of, and additions to, the claims, as set forth above, are made in order to streamline prosecution in this case by limiting examination and argument to certain embodiments of the invention that presently are considered to be of immediate commercial significance. Amendment or cancellation of the claims is not in any manner intended to, and should not be construed to, waive Applicants' right in the future to seek such amended or cancelled subject matter, or similar matter (whether in equivalent, broader, or narrower form) in the present application, and any continuation, divisional, continuation-in-part, RCE, or any other application claiming priority to or through the present application, nor in any manner to indicate an intention, expressed or implied, to surrender any equivalent to the claims as pending after such amendments or cancellations.

It is believed that the foregoing amendments and remarks fully comply with the Office Action and that the claims herein should now be allowable to Applicants. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections and allowance of the case are respectfully requested.

If there are any additional charges with respect to this Amendment or otherwise, please charge them to Deposit Account No. 50-3622.

Respectfully submitted,

CANTOR COLBURN LLP

By 
Pamela J. Curbelo
Registration No. 34,676

Date: December 7, 2006
CANTOR COLBURN LLP
55 Griffin Road South
Bloomfield, CT 06002
Telephone (860) 286-2929
Facsimile (860) 286-0115
Customer No.: 23413